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CONSUMER TIME

THE CONSUMER SPEAKS ON HOUSE DRESSES

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: January 11, 1947

ORIGIN: WRC

TIME: 12:15--12:30 PM EST

(Produced by the United States Department of Agriculture.
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The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast
of the program...presented for more than thirteen years in
the interest of consumers.)

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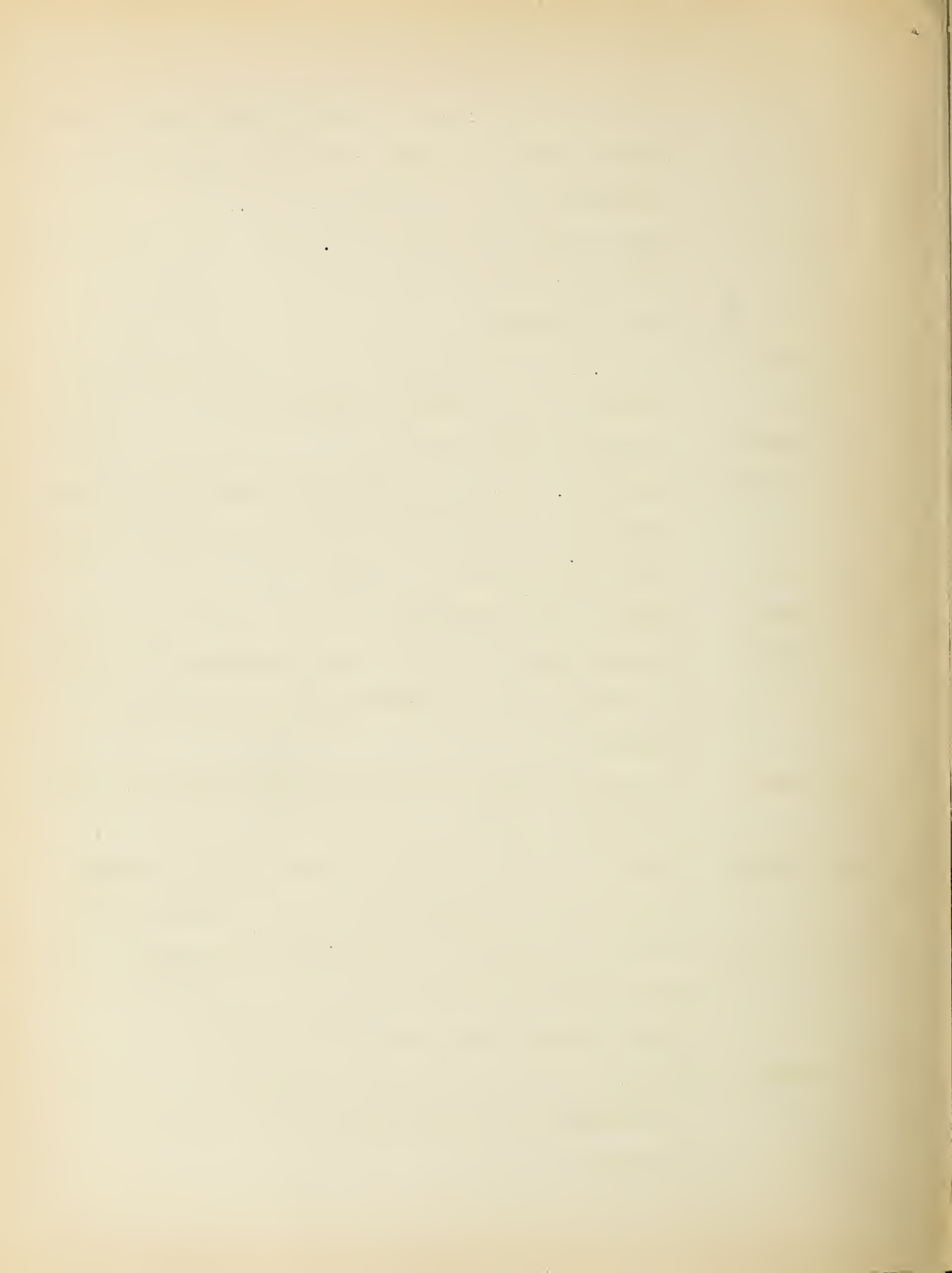
1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...RINGS TWICE...
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER
4. ANCR. During the next fifteen minutes the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
- 4A. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...CLOSE DRAWER
5. SALESGIRL: Here's your change, madame...eight...nine...and one makes ten.
And here are your house dresses. They look just darling on you. I know you'll enjoy them.
6. JOHN: But...will she?
7. FREYMAN: Or will she find after the first washing that the color fades...
or the material shrinks...or the buttons fall apart? And then
that darling little house dress is just another...shabby, drab,
ill-fitting rag. Yes...house dresses are a real problem to
American women.
8. JOHN: But they're one item women are looking at critically before
they hand over the money to put in the Nation's Cash registers.

9. FREYMAN: So today on CONSUMER TIME...the Consumer speaks and tells what she wants in the way of house dresses.
10. JOHN: And contrary to opinions regarding women by some men...but not all...the ladies can agree...very decidedly on the kind of house dresses they want.
11. FREYMAN: Yes we know they do...very definitely. They voiced their ideas in the nation-wide project called the CONSUMER SPEAKS.
12. JOHN: Over eleven thousand women all over the country spoke up and said what they wanted in house dresses.
13. FREYMAN: Perhaps you were in one of the discussion groups. Lots of women's clubs took part, didn't they, Johnny?
14. JOHN: Yes, Mrs. Freyman. The American Home Economics Association is the sponsor and they reported that seven hundred fifty different groups through^{out} the country took part.
15. FREYMAN: Including the home demonstration clubs of the U. S. Extension Service.
16. JOHN: Well, say, Mrs. Freyman...isn't that where you first heard about the CONSUMER SPEAKS project?
17. FREYMAN: That's right. The women in our home demonstration club had been complaining about the quality of house dresses and children's clothes for some time. We all seemed to gripe about poor merchandise to each other...but we never did much (FADE) more about it.
18. SOUND: HUM OF WOMEN'S VOICES. KEEP IN B.G.
19. MRS. GREEN: There's too much stuff on the counters and shelves today that's inferior. Of course not all of it. But it hardly seems worthwhile to have made some of it.

20. FREYMAN: In other words... it looks like a waste of some one's time to make it...the materials are wasted that went into it... and it's a waste of anyone's money to buy it.
21. GREEN: That goes for some of our house dresses...especially after the first trip to the wash.
22. SOUND: BRING VOICES UP.
23. FREYMAN&GREEN: AD LIB REMARKS LIKE "Just plain junk"... "That's right".
etc.
24. SOUND: GAVEL
25. PRESIDENT: Girls...girls...listen.
26. SOUND: OUT
27. PRESIDENT: I went to a training meeting recently...and we talked over this very problem. Now at that meeting I learned how we can help improve this condition. If we just take time at one of our meetings to make a list of the things we think a house dress should have...we can have our ideas included in a national survey called the Consumer Speaks.
28. GREEN: Well, let's do it now!
29. FREYMAN: Yes...why not?
30. PRESIDENT: Well, I'll tell you how we can get started in a systematic way. (PROJECTING) Why don't I just write our ideas down on the blackboard. Now...everyone think about the house dress you had on this morning.
31. GREEN: (GROANS) Oh.
32. CAST: GENERAL LAUGHTER.
33. PRESIDENT: Then we can start to jot down our suggestions.
34. GREEN: I want a house dress that won't sneak up on me when I sit down.

35. FREYMAN: She wants a fuller cut skirt then, doesn't she?
36. PRESIDENT: Well I don't want any pleats in mine.
37. GREEN: I like gores better, myself. They're easier to iron.
38. CAST: ALL TALKING AT ONCE
39. PRESIDENT: Well now wait a minute. Everyone has too many ideas. We've got to get this on the blackboard. Let's see ..let me write down "fuller skirt"...
40. FREYMAN: Then under that write "no pleats"...and then "gored skirts".
41. GREEN: Listen...what I want to know is...what good's it going to do us just to say what kind of house dresses we'd like to buy?
42. PRESIDENT: Manufacturers say they make what we consumers ask for. And retailers say they stock what we ask for.
43. FREYMAN: Do they?
44. PRESIDENT: Well, let's give them the chance to...by telling them what we want. Don't forget, every time you make a purchase... you're casting a vote for that article.
45. FREYMAN: Sure...if you buy it...you approve of it.
46. GREEN: The trade papers say it's up to us to decide what kind of labels we want too. If we really want more facts. .they say they'll give them to us...if we'll read them and use them.
47. FREYMAN: Of course some of us have been asking for changes...more durable articles...better designs...and even more information on the labels.
48. GREEN: But our voices haven't reached all the manufacturers and retailers, I'm afraid...probably because not enough voices have chimed in.

49. PRESIDENT: That's the spirit. More of us need to speak up and be heard. And now is the time to speak. Manufacturers face keen post-war competition for the consumers' dollar...and they know it. Talk of change is in the air. So...let's start off by telling interested manufacturers and retailers what improvement we want in house dresses.
50. GREEN: Yes let's...let's take a vote on it. I make a motion we participate in the CONSUMER SPEAKS project.
51. FREYMAN: I second it, madame president.
52. PRESIDENT: All in favor...raise your right hand. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Those opposed (VERY SLIGHT PAUSE) The motion is carried. We're going to be consumers with a voice!
53. SOUND: MURMUR OF VOICES UP AND OUT.
54. FREYMAN: And that, Johnny... is how our local home demonstration club got interested in the CONSUMER SPEAKS project on house dresses.
55. JOHN: Well, Mrs. Freyman...your group is probably typical of others all over the country.
56. FREYMAN: Yes...I'm sure it is. Almost all the women were homemakers with no outside employment. Most of them were from families of two to six members...both farm and non-farm families. And what our group decided about house dresses is typical of what other groups from coast to coast decided.
57. JOHN: Well...let's get down to buttons and zippers and stuff, Mrs. Freyman. Just what do women want in the house dresses they buy?



58. FREYMAN: Colorfastness topped everything else in importance...and shrinkage control is the next in line. Those are the top two items American women want in their partial dreams of cotton house dresses.
59. JOHN: Even a man can appreciate those two points. But...did you say "cotton dresses?"
60. FREYMAN: Yes we all started out to tell what we wanted in low-priced cotton house dresses. But many women thought it was important to emphasize that they wanted one hundred per cent cotton house dresses...Of course the women had lots of other things to say about the quality of the fabric too. Against the background of water rushing into tubs of swirling soapsuds.
61. SOUND: TAP WATER AND GURGLING
62. FREYMAN: Against the rapid churning of the washing machine...
63. SOUND: WASHING MACHINE EFFECT...KEEP BOTH IN B.G.
64. FREYMAN: The voices of American women are the counterpoint in the wash day symphony.
65. PRESIDENT: Please please let's have fabrics that don't need special care in laundering.
66. GREEN: Oh dear this water is too hot...Will we always have to watch out for low temperatures in washing or ironing?
67. PRESIDENT: I vote for dresses that hold their shape and look like new after they're washed
68. GREEN: I'll second that!
69. PRESIDENT: Give us a house dress that's all washable...with shoulder pads... and a belt that will wash, too.
70. GREEN: And how about making those washable shoulder pads permanently stiffened?

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71. PRESIDENT: I have a wonderful washing machine. But what good does it do me if my house dresses have trimmings that won't wash well... and I have to do the dress by hand.
72. GREEN: Buttons should be able to go through the family wash and not flatten (GETTING MADDER AND MADDER) melt, rust, fade, discolor, crack, or break.
73. PRESIDENT: My main complaint about house dresses is the color. (WAILS)
We don't want it all to come out in the wash!
74. SOUND: UP AND OUT.
75. JOHN: How about sizes of house dresses, Mrs. Freyman? Are women concerned about them? House dresses always seem to look as if they don't fit. No offense intended, now.
76. FREYMAN: Ah!... Johnny. You've hit on a subject that brought a barrage of comments from all the discussion groups in this project... the CONSUMER SPEAKS about house dresses. One of the things that bothers women most is the size. They want correctly sized and proportioned dresses for the different figure types.
77. GREEN: Mirror mirror on the wall...who is fairest of them all?
78. PRESIDENT: (ON FILTER) Not the tall girl in her dress that's too short.
79. SOUND: GLISSANDO UP ON SLIDE WHISTLE.
80. GREEN: (ON FILTER) Not the short girl in her dress that's too long.
81. SOUND: GLISSANDO DOWN.
82. PRESIDENT: (ON FILTER) Not the stout lady in her dress that's too tight.
83. SOUND: CLOTH RIPPING
84. GREEN: It said size sixteen...but I knew it looked small.
85. PRESIDENT: I thought this was rather a large size fourteen.
86. GREEN: What makes me so mad is that I go into one store and a size sixteen dress fits. But in another store it doesn't. Why can't it be the same in all stores?



87. PRESIDENT: Don't be unreasonable. How can the sizes be the same in all stores?
88. GREEN: How about hose?...If you buy size ten in a store it's the same size ten you'd get from a mail order.
89. FREYMAN: (SARCASTIC) And how about men's shirts?
90. PRESIDENT: 'Nuff Said.
91. GREEN: Can't be enough said until all house dresses come in uniform sizes.
92. FREYMAN: That's right. Why I read once that our alteration bill as a nation is terrific. Before the war it was quoted in the millions of dollars. And it's probably higher now.
93. PRESIDENT: And while we're on the subject of sizes...how about roomy dresses that we can work in comfortably?
94. GREEN: Older women who are short would like mature styles in small sizes.
95. PRESIDENT: And younger women who need large size dresses want youthful styles.
96. GREEN: Besides being attractive...house dresses should be easy to get into.
97. PRESIDENT: That's why I like a house dress that opens all the way down the front.
98. GREEN: Did anybody mention pockets?...I want 'em larger.
99. PRESIDENT: Short sleeved house dresses are easier to work in.
100. GREEN: Put in my vote for simple necklines and set-in belts.
101. SOUND: SLIGHT PAUSE.
102. FREYMAN: Now another thing women are looking for in house dresses is good workmanship, Johnny.
103. JOHN: Even in low-priced dresses, Mrs. Freyman?

104. FREYMAN: Even in low-priced dresses. They want well-made, neat dresses that are securely sewed.
105. JOHN: I guess that means good seams.
106. FREYMAN: Right you are. The women decided that seams in low-priced dresses should be at least one-half of an inch wide.
107. JOHN: That's good, huh?
108. FREYMAN: Sure it's good. The wider the seam...the less it's apt to pull out. And of course you can always let the seam out later if you need to. Oh yes...you always should look for a wide seam when you buy a house dress, Johnny.
109. JOHN: (INNOCENTLY) Oh I will...I will.
110. FREYMAN: (LAUGHING) Now another thing the ladies say they want...and this is very serious, Johnny...is hems at least two to two-and-a-half inches wide. That's essential. And so are better buttonholes and better belts. Some women actually said "either give us good belts...or none at all."
111. JOHN: That's the spirit.
112. FREYMAN: But this matter of good workmanship all hangs together with sizing and shrinkage control.
113. JOHN: How do you mean, Mrs. Freyman?
114. FREYMAN: Well, if you know that your dress won't shrink...or in other words that it will fit you the same after washing...then the width of the hem isn't so important. Especially in the lowest price dresses.
115. JOHN: Well, Mrs. Freyman...all this has convinced me that women know what they want in the way of house dresses.
116. FREYMAN: Indeed they do, Johnny. And when it comes to the price of house dresses they're doing some thinking too.

117. JOHN: Yes...when that cash register rings...
118. SOUND: CASH REGISTER
119. JOHN: Women Say...
120. PRESIDENT: I prefer to pay more for a good dress and have fewer.
121. GREEN: Me too. I can't afford to buy low-priced house dresses. They don't last long enough...and I have to keep replacing them.
122. PRESIDENT: Medium-priced house dresses should be more attractive than the low-priced. I mean, they should have better styles...better buttons and buttonholes too.
123. GREEN: I don't think it's too much to ask for a medium-priced house dress that we can use for street wear as well as in the house.
124. PRESIDENT: Now here's what my friends and I think should be the balance between the price of farm products and the price of a house dress.. We don't expect to pay more for a good house dress than the price of ten dozen eggs.
125. GREEN: In plain words...we want a cheap house dress...but we want a good one.
126. SOUND: PAUSE
127. JOHN: Well, Mrs. Freyman...when news of this survey the CONSUMER SPEAKS about house dresses gets around...it should start a lot of business people thinking.
128. FREYMAN: That's the idea, Johnny.
129. JOHN: I'm wondering if some smart business man right at this moment at a board meeting isn't saying something like this. (CLEARS THROAT POMPOUSLY SEVERAL TIMES.) Ah...gentleman. It would seem the women of America know what they want in the way of good quality low-priced house dresses. Let's give it to them. Let's give it to them and look to a boom in our dress manufacturing business! (CLEARS THROAT AGAIN.)



130. FREYMAN: Well, let's hope they are, Johnny...at least something like that. But we really do know that dress manufacturers are interested in this survey of what women want in house dresses.
-: Because the American Home Economics Association has had quite a few letters from dress manufacturers saying that they're interested in the survey. Here are some of the letters, Johnny, if you'd like to look through them.
133. JOHN: Swell ..let's see..."As a manufacturer of house dresses, we are very much interested in your recent poll on features women would like to see in housedresses.". .Hmmm ..here's another one. .says "since we are a manufacturer of house dresses, we are most interested in having a copy of this survey for our guidance, and will indeed appreciate receiving same."
134. FREYMAN: And Johnny ..notice some of those letterheads...some of the biggest dress manufacturers and business firms in the country.
135. JOHN: Listen to this one. "Please send us several copies of your report on the detailed findings of this survey. We are extremely interested in it."And say...lend an ear to this.
- "Several of our buyers for retail stores are interested in this CONSUMER SPEAKS survey. We are always very anxious to get any information which can guide us in the development of our lines to better suit the customers needs."
136. FREYMAN: Better not read them all, Johnny. We don't have time.
137. JOHN: Well, I've read enough anyway to convince me that the business world is interested in what the consumer has to say on the subject of house dresses.
138. FREYMAN: Yes and that's very encouraging, isn't it?
139. JOHN: It certainly is.

140. FREYMAN: But I think it's even more encouraging that consumers are speaking up and letting their wants become known. And before we talk about next week's program, I'd like to mention that we're going to tell our listeners about another CONSUMER SPEAKS survey conducted by the American Home Economics Association.
141. JOHN: What will the consumer speak on this time, Mrs. Freyman?
142. FREYMAN: Two very important foods...bread and meat. And I can tell you now that women have some very definite ideas on these items too.
143. JOHN: I should hope so. Do you know any particular things they discussed, Mrs. Freyman?
144. FREYMAN: Well, briefly the survey touched on enriched bread...labels on bread...flavor, keeping quality, and texture. Also the size of the loaves. Those are just a few.
145. JOHN: How about meat?
146. FREYMAN: There were lots of ideas about meat...grading, and marking, and more boned meat...more small cuts. But we can't tell it all here. We'll have the whole story for our listeners soon.
147. JOHN: Now...what's on our CONSUMER TIME program next Saturday?
148. FREYMAN: A week from today..."Pin Money Possibilities". .with some extra earning ideas for homemakers who may have more time on their hands during these dead-of-winter months than at any other time of year.
149. JOHN: Ways to earn extra pin money...good idea.
150. FREYMAN: Yes...very practical suggestions that both rural and urban homemakers will enjoy.
151. JOHN: So friends, Be with us next week for another edition of
152. SOUND: CASH REGISTER.



153. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!
154. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER
155. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Eleanor Miller and directed by Frederick Schweikher, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C.

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